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THE EPISTLE THAT IOHAN STVRmius, a man of great lerninge and iugement, sent to the Cardynalles and prelates, that were chosen and appointed by the Bysshop of Rome, to serche out the abuses of the churche, Translated into englysshe by Rychard Morysine.

IOHAN STVRMIVS TO THE Cardynalles and pzelates appoin-ted to ſerche oute the abuſyons of the churche, ſendeth gretyng.



OVR BOKE wzytten at the com-maundement of the byſchop of Rome, cō-teynyng ſuche thyn-ges, as ye thynke make moſte to the reſtaurying of re-ligion, beinge bzought vnto vs this laſte moneth, ſtyzed dyuers men to ſpeake dyuerſely of you. And all be it I thinke you ought lytel to paſſe, what euery man ſayth of theſe your deuyſes, yet excepte men wyſe and lerned do allowe them, I canne not thynke, that in any aſſemble of men mete to ſytte in a councill, ye canne obteyne that you go aboute, that is to reſtoze the churche vnto her olde

state and pristine dignitie. For al be it, all thynges are to be redressed by good counsell, whyche you, beinge men of suche prudencie, may, yf ye lyste, lyghtly inuent, yet excepte the lerned sorte do approue your inuencions, men woll not thynke, that ye haue founde suche ways as ar most mete for that pourpose. Wherfore for as moch as I am nowe in those places, and amonge suche men, as prudently iudge of your busynesse, & seing I wel perceyued, what men iuge of you, I thought it very conuenient, brefely in writing, to shewe you their sentences, that ye thereby maye perceyue, what they allowe, what they myslyke, and what they wolde haue handled after other sort than ye haue done. Many hope wel bothe in your lernynge and iudgement, whom also this new deuise of

the byſhop of Rome, bryngeth into good opinion, that one day a better agrement may be made betwixt vs. For as longe as the byſhop of Romes eares were ſhytte agaynſte all trouthe, and open to all flatterers, there was no place for medycine to worke in. But nowe ſythe there is a byſhop of Rome, whiche ſekethe men, amonges whom ſome ar ſuch as are not wont to flatter, ſome ſuche as woll not lye, many of greate lernynge: Certes eyther nowe remedyes ſhall be founde, to heale the great and longe diſeaſe of the ſycke churche, or els it being beaten thus on euery ſyde, weakened, & decaied, woll vndoubtedly ſhortly all togyther falle. Thoſe that were in your places before, wold acknowlege no faute. They ſtyffely defended all to be wel done, that biſhops of Rome

hadde ben authoꝛs of. This errour is nowe taken awey by you, whyche shewe, not onely moche hurt and o= pen ruine of the church, but also cõ= fesse and acknowlege byshoppes of Rome to haue ben thautours of it, whyche beleuing in the sayinges of flatterers, thought them selfes loꝛ= des of lawes. This youre sentence was very pleasant vnto al our men here, bycause they hope, euen as ye do se, the calamities of religion, the ruine of honestie, and vtter distruc= tion of the churche, except remedye be found, that so ye wol as moch as in you lieth, staye these grefes, that they go no furder. It is a rare thing and moch moꝛe than menne coulde hope foꝛ, that there shoulde come a bishop of Rome, whiche shulde re= quire his pꝛelates, vpon theyr othe, to open trouthe, to shewe abuses, to

seke

seke remedies for thē: so that if any thing be otherwise agreed vpon by you, than right religion may beare, the faute shall be yours, the byshop of Rome hath lytell here to be charged withall. Wherfore you that are chosen to so godly and necessarie a thyng, ye ought with all mature diligence, to study & labour, that this that ye haue begonne, may come to a good ende. AND seing you haue the byshops assent and commandement also, ye ought in no case, to let so godly a thynge, to quayle at your handes. If this bishop continue aliue, and be styll of this mynde, if it be trewe that you saye, ye lacke nothinge, but your owne good wyl, to retourne many commodyties vnto all men of Christis relygion. If he shall chaunge his mynde, yet you se there is a waye opened for all men,

to enter into your dispraises, if ye be founde thoccasion, that suche hope as men are in, be nowe quite taken from them. For that that shulde be so cõmodious, so holsome vnto the hole world, ones power gyuẽ to you to bryng it to passe, yf ye lyste, cannat be neglected of you, without your great shame. Wherfore whyle it is his wyll, whiche beareth greatest strooke amonge you, ye muste whyle he lyueth, take the tyme, and let not suche occasyons slyppe. By this your industrie, fydelitie, prudence, and vertue, relygion, that is almost fallen, may be set vp agayn. If for age he be taken from you, yet ye muste nowe make suche foundations, that they whiche shalbe created after hym, may not let slyppe a mattier of suche weyght, without their gret shame. You must prouide

that

that as sone as it may be, good men and well lerned in dede, may studye for the redresse of the churche. In these your labours, ye shal haue many that wol be gladde to helpe you, many princis, many their subiectis, whiche may make a iuste conuocation, many many woll be gladde to helpe suche as frankely shewe their iudgementes, moche rather than those, that bynde theym selfe to the seruitude of flatterie.

¶ THE auctoritie of councils is decayed longe sythens, bycause they haue ben rather callyd for the satisfyeng of the bysshop of Romes appetites, auarice, and ambition, than for the setting forth of religion. And also suche men haue come to it, as wolde not plainly expresse such fautes as they knew, but rather serued his turne, vnto whom they aknow-

lege them selfis greatly to be boũd. For howe can a byshoppe of Rome think to be corrected of them, whose lybertie he hath taken away: whose wylles and fauourable voyces, he hath wonne with greatte rewardes and promyses. Wherfore ye thinke as ye shulde, where ye say, that a bishop of ROME ought not to be lawles, vnder no law, neither that what him lusteth, is lawfulle, but rather that he shoulde luste those thynges that lawes allow. Here ye haue goten great praise amonge oure men, bicause ye are the fyrst of this your order, that durste pronounce it mete for a byshoppe of Rome, to kepe al suche lawes hym selfe, as he wolde haue obeyed of the churche.

¶ALSO that that you sayde nexte vnto this, was spoken of you very prudently, that no lordshyp is com-

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mitted to the bysshop of Rome, but rather a certayne cure, by the which he maye distrybute thynges in the churche, accordynge to good order: and so that he is rather a curate of suche thinges, than a lorde of them, and that men are committed to his faithfulnes and dilygence, he hym selfe hauynge neither dition ne power aboue lawes, no domynation, ne reigne, whereby he maye eyther chaunge or violate any lawe. If ye admitte this to be trewe, and wolle vtterly graunt vs this, a great part of our controuersie is taken away, grantynge vs also this, that we did not dissente from you without great and iuste causes. For yf ye wylle graunte it, to be onely a ministration, that the Bisshoppe of Rome is chargid with, must you not agree to this also, that all other magistrates

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in the churche, be none other thyng, but minysters of dyuine cures: soo that yf their ministration be good, and for the welth of the church, and accordyng to the lawes, they shulde continue styll: if it be vnprofitable, hurtful, if it be ful agaynst ỹ lawes, such their honor shuld be takē away from them, lyke as it is cōmanded in many places of holy scripture.

¶ Wherfore ye added this vnto the other very wel, that lawes ought to contynue euer, and that they might not be takē away, either by any byshop of Romes priuilege, wrestyng, or indulgence. For if this were laufull, what shulde be lefte vntouched in any place, what shuld be safe and sure, if whan wyll wolde, luste may dyspense with lawe? We see, whyle bishops of Rome, now of late haue take vpon them such dispensations,

what

what windowes they opened for tirranny to crepe in at, for religion to crepe out at. Nowe where lawes be kepte, this also shall remayne, that they be made bishops, and teachers of the people of god, which ar knowen to be lerned, to be of great innocencie of life, to be of faithe and diligence in doing their duetie. For if we wol haue the world amended, we must haue the people good, well instructed and taught, they must be as a felde well tilled. Man is welle tilled, whan he hathe a good preacher, in whom is great knowledge, study, and pure mynd, without whiche prechers, neither the people can be well taught, nor the church flourishe, neither the teachers owne auctoritie be estemed.

Agayne, what a goodly thing is it, that ye write of suche as commit symo-

ſimonie: which are ſo many, that if your ſentence may haue place, and they remoued, as the law wil, which by force of frēdſhip or money, haue gotten promotions, ye ſhall ſcrape out many blottes, that nowe defyle religion, ye ſhal alſo with your eaſe come to that, that you ſeke, that is, that mete miniſters be made in the church, miniſters laufully created, which ſhuld haue both lerning and honeſt life, always prelēt with their flocke, there doinge that that ſaynt Paule and generall councils, wold a ſheparde ſhoulde do to his flocke.

These be the thynges, that make many of vs hope well of you, and thinke that ye intend wel. It is very new & ſtrange, a thing ſcaſe hard of, that mē of your order ſhuld iuge freely. In thaſſemble made at Nuremberge Adrian, than biſhoppe of

Rome

Rome, dyd aknowlege many suche thinges as ye do now: and all be it they wolde his auctoritie shulde be highest, yet there were verye many of other astates, that coulde not abide, that he shulde aknowlege suche thinges to be true. I praye you is not this euen to graunt byshops of Rome impunitie of all that they lust: and yet whan they haue doone worst, to make thē thinke it a shame bishops of Rome to say they haue done euyl: Wherfore I must speke vnto you Contarene, and you Sadolete, and you Federike Salernitane, and you also whiche ar chosen to do this thing, I muste call vpon you, that you applie this mattier, & thinke that at this time it is put in your handis, to restore to the church both her helth and dignitie agayne. If you diligently and faithfully do

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as it becommeth to you to doo, you shall see a flourysshynge common welthe of Chriſte. If contrary wise you do it negligentlye, and thynke rather vpon your owne gaynes, thā vppon the amendement of thynges amisse, men herafter wol neuer seke redresse of matters at your handes.

But for as moche as I haue shewed you, wherin your boke pleseth many, nowe I woll alsoo telle you, what many thynke wanteth in it. And here I woll let certain thinges passe, whiche seme very nedefull to be decyded. yet seinge they are by noughty custome longe sythens receiued, I wol not now moche touch them. I can not see by what reason you can call the bishop of Rome vniuersall bysshop, for as moche as saynt Gregorie, a man vehement, and very desyrous to amplifie that dignitie,

dignytie, refused this name, as a voyce of Antichriste. Lyke reason moued thother.xx. bishops, whiche were before Gregorie, to refuse that name, all be it the councill of Calcedonie gaue it them. But let vs passe ouer this disputation, and gyue for a season hym that nowe is, so to be callyd, we recke not so moche what he be callyd, as that he do such thinges as become him, that is, that his power and all his studyes maye be conuerted to the setting forth of the glorie of Christ. Tyranny is moche ageynst the setlyng of thinges, this title vniuersal bishop bringeth violēce with it, violēce bringeth distruction of honesti. Wherfore they that be of great wytte and honestie, and can forsee thynges, wolde this vsurped title, thoccasion of all these hurtis, were taken away, as a thing

verye pestilent. This cause moued Pelagius and Gregorie to refuse this name, all be it many good men beinge deceiued, frankely offered it to them.

¶ Many men are sorie, that in this your deuise no mencion is made, De doctrina religionis, whiche moste specially ought to haue bene intreated of. For to speake somewhat of this, what people, what citie, what multitude of men, in especiall throughe your dominions, canne you fynde, that is welle instructed in poyntes of religion? God semeth neuer to be more alienate from vs, than whan we be ignorante in his gospelle, whyche ignorance hathe bene soo great, that not only the rude people haue not knowen, what is conteined in holye scripture, but also this ignorance hath bene founde in bys-

shops and cardinals of your order. In soo moche that we in oure tyme haue sene byshoppes of Rome vtterly ignorannt of holye scripture, and all togither vntaughte in relygion. For to let passe Innocentius octauus, and manye other lyke, I pray you Sadolete, what lernynge or studie in holye Scripture was in Clement the.vii. whome you wonderfully prayse: Can you make any man beleue, that knewe hym, that he had any knowledge in holye scripture, naye, that he euer thoughte theron, to the ende he wolde eyther rede those thynges, wherupon oure religion is grounded, or here them declared to hym by anye other: I thynke that neyther you, nor any other of those, whyche knewe the faction of his lyfe, can remember, that eyer Clemente for his knowledge,

cauſed at any tyme a boke of ſcripture to be caried about with hym. Thus whyle we cloke ignorance, while we ſay menne haue that they haue not, while we ſtudye to pleaſe, oft tymes we aſſente to their vyces, & gyue very euyll example, by praiſynge theym that deſerue diſprayſe, and oft times cauſe thoſe that folow their vices, to think, that their fautes maye be borne, bycauſe that by our lies and flatteringes, Clementes vices and ſuche other are couered. I woll not name other of your order, bothe men of filthy lyfe, and vtterly vnlerned. Theſe examples that you haue had before your eies, might haue exhorted you to ſpeake ſomewhat of doctrine. I doubt not but you knowe, howe neceſſarye a thynge the knowledge of Chriſtis doctrine is. For if the mind be ſtired

vp

vp with lyuely teachyng, to put ful confidence in Chriſte, and is after this confidence fulle inflamed with the loue of religion, honeſtie, and goodnes, it is almoſte neceſſary all kyndes of vyces to reygne there, where no voice inſtructed with godly ſentences is harde, Chriſte muſte nedes be vnknowē there, where his benefites with all his actes lie vnſpoken of, whiche is euen in euerye place, where you haue power & rule. What can be moze foliſher, than to take Eraſmus colloquies, and ſcolaſtical diſputations away, leauing vnto wycked fowle and inueterate cuſtome, the rule of religion, and foz holy thinges to teache trifles. I ſay not this, that I moche allowe the maner of our diſputations, oz that I thinke ſtudies can nat be maynteined without Eraſmus dialoges.

Scholes vse many thynges in our dayes, that are to be corrected, eloquence, wysedome, and knowledge in diuinitie, maye well be attayned without suche wayes as men nowe vse: but yet it greueth me, that ye omytte thynges of moste weight, ye and most necessary, whyle you embusy your selfes aboute smalle and trykelynge matters. Howbe it we feare that Erasmus colloquies are not banysshed oute of the schooles by you, bycause they hurte good maners, but rather bycause they doo note manye thynges, whyche lawfullye maye be reprehended in you. As longe as Erasmus was alyue, ye coulde allowe his wrytynges, or atte the leaste ye coulde keepe your selues frome reprehendynge theym. But to lette these thynges passe, we must here stycke

with you, and saye that ye oughte, where as ye so ernestly touche suche trifles, somewhat to haue sayde of this, that in Fraunce and Italy the gospel is neglected, fansies and fables are taughte, and ignorannce of relygyon taken for beste excuse. Who seethe not, howe all thynges are tourned frome trewe to false, from godlynes to lucre, from beste to worste? For what thynge can be taught sincerely there, where superstition is come into the place of relygion, mannes philosophie, into the place of diuine wisedome, Socrates for Christ, Aristotle and Plato in stede of holy wryters? And yet I wolde not these thynges so to be taken, as thowghe I dydde dysprayse phylosophie: for this kynde of lerning hath many commodities in it, but yet the thing standeth thus

that excepte mans minde be guided and ledde with diuine knowlege, it wandereth oute of the ryght waye, gadding hither and thither, vncertaine where it maye stande. For as longe as the minde is not constant, whiche is while ignorance ruleth, howe can men do their duetie?

¶ It was meete, ye shoulde haue thought somwhat vpon these thinges, and that an amendement of abuses, is than lyke to be had, whan mens mindes are better instructed in religion. Blindnes of witte, and ignorance of goddis worde, hathe bothe brought in many euyll thynges, and driuen awaye many good. I see not howe this your way maye be defended, except ye thinke thus, by good ministers, being ones lawfully instituted, true doctrine maye be easily restored. Wherof ye coulde

make

make no mẽcion in this your deuise without great offence of thẽ, whom ye take for greattest. But if it be so, that you beinge sworne to vtter to the bishoppe suche thinges, as you thought metest to be reformed, can not without greate feare speake of thinges very necessarie, lest ye shuld alienate those frõ you, which beare the greate stroke, what hope & trust may we haue, that the olde and true ecclesiasticall discipline shall be restored again by you? One of these thre thinges must be true, either ye hate the trouthe, and so doo dissemble, or els for feare ye dare nat vtter it, and so kepe it downe by your minysters, or elles ye mynded not the trouthe. If ye woll say, ye mynded not the trouthe, ye condempne your selfe, yf ye lay feare for your excuse, we wol be sorie, that the trouth may

not come into the lyght, for popiſhe power and cruell tyrannye. Certes eyther ye hate trouthe, or elles they be afrayde of it, whome ye haue in reuerence for their ample benefytes towardes you, and whome ye alſoo feare for the great power they may vſe agaynſt you. Ye can nat be ignorant in this, the hole worlde knoweth, that the goſpelle of Chriſte is taken from your churches. Wenne wolde this goſpelle were reſtored agayn, and though ye ſaye nay, they woll haue it again. Your threttes auayle littell, your priuey watches ar not regarded, your turmentes, your fyre ſhall haue lyttel place herafter. The miſchefes be openid on the one ſyde, the benefytes on the other, frō the whiche yf ye go aboute to kepe all men, ye muſt be at warre, not onlye with menne, but with god and

Chriſt

Chriſte alſo. Oure menne haue no greatter argument of your fal, than that they ſee, ye haue a vayne hope, vtterly to oppreſſe truthe: ye ſeke to doo youre luſtes, by vyolence and ſtrengthe, rather than by common counſell and lauful diſceptation: ye ſeke to abuſe kynges and their auctoritie, rather thã to mayntein your owne, accordynge to the olde diſcipline. Ye maye ſo ſtire vp mens ſtomakes agaynſt you, that except you vſe leſſe proteruite and ſtubbernes, than ye haue heretofore, they wol by force of armes ſeke to oppreſſe this your power. I pray god I be deceiued in thus prophecienge. I praye god that concorde and conformitie of mindes may rather make a peas and tranquillitie, than men be dryuen to amende thinges by ſtrengthe and manſlaughter.

I pray

I pray the Contareyn, the Theatine, the Sadolete, the Friderike, I beseche you for the lernynge, prudencie, industrie, and vertue that is in you, loke vppon the calamities, whiche do afflict the common welth of Chrystendome, bynge equitie with you, vse indifferencie, whiche is verye necessarie in thinges thus troublyd. You Sadolete doo laye many thinges to our charge falsely in your dialogues. Surely but that I thinke ye do it rather vpon ignorance and fals persuasion, than by iudgement, I see not howe you can excuse this your facte, if good men be iudges betwixte you and vs. We do not aknowledge suche fautes to be in vs, as ye charge vs withal, we take all men to wytnes, that iudge truely. We doubt not but they wol say our doctrine lacketh suche fautes

tes as ye fynde in it. If you come to iudge with this opinion in youre heed, condemnynge our writynges before you se them, we can not giue you the prayse of equitie, of good doctrine, of faythfull handlynge of thynges, of godlynes, which al we wyshed to be in you. The vnworthy handlynge of thinges carieth me away, sorowe troubleth me, doloure causeth me to write somewhat more sharpely than myn entent was: and yet who lusteth truely to iudge, shal finde this to be an admonition of one that coueteth to shewe him selfe a citezin of Christis common welth, ennemie to no man, ennemye to nothing, vice only excepted. We striue not with you for any matter of our owne, We contende not with you for your possessions, whiche I and ours grant you without any enuie,

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we doo not contende ne desyre, that you be put downe. We seke not, that your power vtterlye be taken frome you: My desyre is, with all the reste of our sorte, that the congregations auctoritie maye stande faste, we labour, that if we shall leese all, that yet we may kepe the doctrine of the gospell, for the teachinge of goddis people, that they being heyres with Christ, may know their fathers wyl by Christe. euery man wold his last wyll were knowen to his heyre, lette Christe haue suche libertie with vs, let his testament and last wyll, conteynynge in it nothyng but wordes of lyfe, sentēces declared by goddis own voice, left vnto vs as wytnesses of his assured promises, declarīg the iust title that we haue to our inheritaunce, let this be taught vnto all men. Wherfore good men do

require,

require, that you take moze hede of goddis doctrine, whiche as it hathe made them mothe better than they were, oz without it, coude haue ben, so they thynke it may and wol wozk lyke effecte in all other after this. If you woll kepe suche richesse, power, and possessions, as ye haue, our desyze is, that you so kepe theym, that men may perceyne, ye haue them to the amplifieng of religion, & setting fozth of the glozie of Chziste.

Nowe what saye ye of the sacramentes and ceremonies of the churche? Is not the vse of them al wonderfully defyled? and yet ye thynke noo remedy is to be inuented foz the abolyshynge of their fylthy abuse. Noo, noo, you holde youre peace, as thoughe this parte of Relygyon were veray cleane, no faute to be founde in it. To speake somewhat

de Eucharistia, haue you not peruer
ted the vse of this sacrament, with ỹ
name also? For where as it was first
instituted, as a thynge to lyft vppe
mens hartes vnto hope and faythe,
and profited none but suche as toke
parte of it, you haue made it a soli-
tarie and a priuate worke, or at the
least ye haue yelded so moche to the
couetousnes of priestes, that they
haue of a franke and free commun-
nion, made it a faire marchandyse,
and their praiers very salable by it,
in so moche that we be come to that
poynte nowe, that a greate sorte of
men thinke, the masse can doo more
for vs than Christis deathe. This
also is taken for truthe, that though
men do not correcte their lyfe, ney-
ther absteyn from their wickednes,
yet these holy and annoynted mar-
chauntes may obteyne forgyuenes

of

of synnes for theym: And that the auctoritie of this institution shulde be counted the greatter, they thinke that euen the very heryng of masse is of greate momente to swage the anger of God, and to mitigate the peyne due for synne, not only paste, but also for those that they purpose in their mynde to do. And we bothe by holdynge our peace, and also in very dede do allow the same abuse, which is brought in against the institution of Christ, the vse of the apostels, contrarye to the custome of our forefathers, against the expresse wordes and mind also of the lawes. And that this abuse might cõtinue the longer, and not be perceyued, masse by the ennemie of god hathe ben brought into Italye, Fraunce, Germany, Spayne, to be said in latin, which ofte tymes is not vnder-

ſtande of the prieſtes theym ſelfes, moche leſſe of the pooze menne that ſtande aboute it, beinge labourers, wozkemen, nothynge leſſe than ſene in latyn. Agayne the prieſtes eate alone that that many ſhulde eate of, the deathe of oure lozde, and verye lozde is not there declared noz ſhewed to the people. They bzyng men into a certayne feare and conſternation of mynde, they labour not, that men may haue a true confidence in Chriſtis promyſe, they ſtudye not, that by the memozie of Chriſte, our hope ſhulde be encreaſed, oure charitie and loue towarde god and our neyghboure augmented, but endeuour theym ſelfe as though it were with certayne tugglynge caſtes, to bzynge the people from ryghte Iugement.

¶ Nowe as the ſolemne vſe of this

sacrament is defoutmed, soo many other ceremonies are peruerted. Images whiche at the begynnynge were set vp onely for to make vs remembre thynges absente, are nowe highly worshipped. At the fyrst men dyd but loke vpon them, nowe they fall vpon their knees before them, they pray to them, and are many solemne peticions of them, they trym vp theyr bones with golde, they set vp their sepulchres, they fynde stockes, before the whiche mens myndes, while they worshippe that they ought not to worshyp, are poluted. Scarse the Egiptians were so folish in their religion, as we be in oures, whiche haue a certaine facyon prescribed vnto vs of god. We thinke god chaungethe his wylle, as the tyme is chaunged. We thynke we maye sette vp grauen Images,

caste images, and painted stockes, we haue imagined saint Chriſtofer, to be moche holyer than Abrahaim or Joſue. The Jewes coulde not worſhyp Moyſes as a god, we may bowe and knele to saint Dampans image. We thinke we honour them verye lyttell, excepte we giue vnto theym, parte of our goodes and inheritaunce.

What ſhuld I ſay of your indulgences and pardons: as their name is newe, ſo the thing is fainid, vain, and very foolyſhe. What ſhal I ſay of your penance, that you are wont to enioyn ſuch as confeſſe their fautes: are they not falſe, peruerſe, inuēted rather for lucre & tyranny, thā for thamendement of his lyfe, that ſeketh remedy: Ye thynke all ſuche as in dede ſeke for ſalues to cure the diſeaſes of ſycke ſoules, worthye to

be

be hurlyd out of the church: ye condemne them of hereſie, whiche doo what they can, to bringe in pure religion ageyne: ye ſaye they take away the lyghte of religion, whiche go aboute to purge ceremonies: ye ſay, that they ryfle thautozitie of the churche, which go about to cõfirme it. Wold god our intentes and your thoughtes, coulde be layde befoze mens eies: truly we ſhall not haue the aſſente of other nations, befoze your dedes be ſoo opened, that they may not only be perceiued, but alſo ſene with mennes eies. Foz I pray you, what thinge els doo you, than vnder the colour of cozrectinge of a fewe thinges, go aboute to recouer your vſurped auctozitie, iuſtely taken from you by certayne nations: what coueit you moze, than that you maye diſtroy them, whoſe induſtrie,

faith, constancie, and loue of religi-
on hitherto withstand your appeti-
tes. Certes you might lightly bring
this to passe, yf you coulde calle su-
che a councill, as the council of Cō-
stancie was. Men do not meruayl,
that there be a fewe thinges in this
your deliberation, whiche may seme
to shewe a certayne simplicitie, and
a good mynde towardes religion.
For great myschiefes are to be sha-
dowed, vnder the image of vertue:
men that haue iudgementes be sory
to se you so busye in mayntaynynge
vayne ceremonies, and to passe o-
uer trewe doctrine, as a thynge not
worthy to be regarded. I pray you,
howe greatte a thynge is hit, or to
what pourpose, that you speake of
relygiouse mennes apparayle?
Our forefathers toke it for a great
shame, that religion shulde be tried

by

by this cote, or that cote, by this co-
lour or that coloure. Doo not those
rules of monkes, whiche are ascri-
bed to saynt Augustine, saint Fran-
cis, saynt Benedicte, forbidde nota-
ble facions of garmentes in a soli-
tarie relygion, and counte religion
to stande in good lyfe and honeste
maners, nothyng lesse than in cou-
les and kyrtelles? Your ceremonies
be as acceptable vnto God, as the
fastynges of the Jewes were vnto
Christe. O cruel deuotions, in whi-
che whan people ar ones intanglid,
therto allured, either by fals super-
stition or foly, there is noo hope to
get out of that dungion, wherin bi-
cause a man falleth without consy-
deration or aduysement, he loseth
all lybertie, and can nat retourne
to the state and dignitie that nature

set him in, to the whiche god calleth hym, where also he might doo more good to the common weale, than he nowe can, beynge in bondage and seruitude. What steppe of religion remayneth among monkes, sithens ye brought theym to certayne deuotions against their wyll, to certaine ceremonyes that can nat be ended, but whan lyfe departeth? How many of those poyntes shal ye fynde in monkes nowe adayes, that sayncte Augustine and Chrisostome doo require in monkes? Those that God calleth to teache his people, ye shut vp within cloyster walles, amonge an ydel sort of men. they that might do good in the common assembles of their coũtreye, after ye haue ones made them religious, may haue no thing to do with the cõmon welthe. Suche as nature hath giuen quicke-

nes

nes of wytte, loue towarde letters, ſtudy and time to attayn knowlege, thoſe you ioyn with ſuch as neither loue lernynge, nor them that be lerned. Our forefathers dyd inſtitute this monkyſſhe lyfe, bycauſe they wolde haue men holy, lerned, fytte to ſerue their countrey, and not that they wolde them to tarie perpetually in a corner ſole, doinge good to no body. Wold god you could bring monaſteris to their right vſe agein. Howe many flouriſhynge common weales ſhulde you than ſee? What plentie of goodly wyttes? what copie of good and lerned men? You lacke nothinge to theſtablyſſhinge of high tranquillitie and welth, but a good wyll to gyue honeſt counſel. But there be two thynges, whyche beare a great ſtroke in all mattiers, and they bothe are agaynſte you in

this contencion, Knowen trouthe, and Lyfe worthy commẽdation, For the way that ye haue inuẽted, in forbiddinge prieſtes mariages, can nat be commended in men that lyue ſo fleſchly, as prieſtes nowe adayes doo. It is fooliſhe, and moche agayne reaſon, that you wolde the decrees of a fewe later popes to be kepte, and the conſtitutions of the Apoſtelles, and alſo the decrees made in the coũcill at Nece to be broken. For all be it after this Counciłle, there were newe lawes made, whyche plucked frome the clergie their wyues: Yet were there ſome nacions that kepte theyr holde, and wolde not let thynges be taken from theym, that they ſawe nature requyred, and oure forefathers allowed. At the laſt, Gregorie the. vii. came, whyche by violence ſtirring vp moche contention,

vtterly

vtterly forbadde prieſtes to marye. But Pius the ſeconde ſpake moche more godly, whyche was wonte to ſay, that there were great cauſes to plucke wyues from prieſtes, but yet moch greatter cauſes to gyue them wyues agayne. If ye hadde followed this mannes ſayenge, as ye ought, ye ſchulde haue done moche better ſeruyce to the byſſhoppe of Rome, than ye do now. For you ſe, what great hurte we haue thereby, & howe the churche is ſpotted with the wanton and fylthye pleaſures of prieſtes: whych thynges we can not forgette, yet they maye, yf you woll, with the conſent of good men, be taken away, and the old cuſtome reſtored.

¶ Theſe be the thynges that make our men, whoſe ſpecial care is, to ſe religyon flouryſſhe, to thynke as

they do of you. For where as ye say the bysshop of Rome is not a lorde of thynges, but a dispenser: where ye wolde the canons and decrees to be perpetuall, not ones to be made, and after broken: where you take away simonie, where ye require mete ministers, they highly allowe it, and moche desire ꝑ ye thinke as you say. For they that loke ernestely vppon your deuises, are affrayde, bycause they se you passe nothing of true doctrine, bycause you suffre the vse of sacramentis to be peruertid, bicause they see you occupyed in thynges partely lyghte, partly falle, bycause they see you carefulle for relygiouse cotes, for prestes mariages, and litelle or nothynge to studye by what meanes the great sores of the churche maye be healyd, but rather to serche ways to dispatche al suche as

in any poynt go about to bryng you to the doinge of your duetie.

¶ Furthermoze as al theſe thingis that you wzite of, if they come oone by one, be either vayne, wycked, oz fals, ſoo if they come all togyther, they be ſuche, as in our time can not be bzoughte to paſſe. Foz it can not be ſuffered, that ye moſt deſire, that is, they may not be iudges, that are moſte wozthy to be accuſed. Foz ſeing you wol thauctozite to be theirs, that are nowe chiefe and pzincipall in the churche, whiche if the ancient lawes might floriſhe & haue place, ſhulde haue littel oz no power at al, what thinge ſhall we hope foz, to be ryghtely decreed of you? There be many, which partly by ſucceſſion of great inheritance, partly by the benefittes of kynges and pzincis, are ſo auaunced in welth and riches, ſo

corrupted in maners and lyfe, that they can in noo wyse susteyne your correction: they may disanull your sentence veryе well, forasmoche as you woll all iugement and auctorite to be in them. They wol not forsake the trade of their lyfe, vsed now a longe season, auarice woll not let them, ambition wil not suffer them, their other fantasies and pleasures can not abyde an honest reformatiō whiche fansies no man liuynge can take from them, nor redresse, except it be by death or byolence.

Wherfore except you graunt vs to haue mete and conuenient iuges, that may bryng with theym to the councill, trouthe, and lybertie, to say as they shall thynke, ye shall neuer amende thinges amisse in the churche. For lyke as CHRISTE dydde nat commytte the amendemente of

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the Synagoge to the Prieſtes and Phariſees thereof, but to the Apoſtelles and his mynisters, as oure forefathers dyd not commytte Relygyon to the collegyate prieſtes of Grece, or of Rome, but vnto them, which were confyrmed by the goodnes and myght of god: ſo ye ought to commytte the common welthe of Chriſte, to ſuche as can be contente to vſe their dignitie to the ſettynge forthe of honeſtie and relygion, and not to ſuche as abuſe theyr offyce, to the defacyng of trouth, Relygyon, & all godlynes. Ye caſte thoſe out of youre Churche, whyche note youre vyces, and thoſe that haue mooſte nede of all to be corrected, ye make arbytrours and iuges. Is this any other thyng, than to let olde rotten bowes growe ſtylle, and to plucke

vp

hyppethe yonge plantes that nowe begyn to ſpꝛinge in groundes moꝛe fertile thã yours is: I ſay not this, that I wolde men ſhulde thinke, I iuged none amonges you to fauour the trouth, oꝛ that at leaſte there be not ſome of your ſyde, whiche wold religion were redꝛeſſed: but I ſpeke it, bycauſe ye woll ſuch to haue auctoꝛitie, as ſhulde, if lawes myghte haue their places, if canons myght beare the ſtroke, if ſymonie were taken away, if fytte and true minyſters were oꝛdeined in the churche, not onely change their maners, but alſo leaue their aſtate and kynde of lyuynge.

¶ The byſchoppe of Lege, a man of the ſame place that ye are of, very couetous, verye cruelle, and nothing lerned, is (as ye know) departed: ye haue manye ſuche monſters

with

with you at this present time, in the court of Rome. I wol not name thē that be alyue, I speake of that holy byshop, bycause it is well knowen, what he was: If ye gyue menne of his sorte lycence to iuge, and make suche decrees, as they wolde were made, you may be assured, they wol neuer admytte yours, neither any other, that shall be oughte worthe. Wherfore menne thynke, that you haue taken vppon you this consultation in vayne: They feare ye cast them in a vayne hope, you doo soo surely, except this kynde of iudges be reiected, and suche chosen as loue moche more the common welth, thā their priuate commodities.

¶ But nowe lette vs come to this, that ye say of the byshop of Rome, you woll thre thinges to be in hym. First, that he be byshop vniuersall,

 seconde,

secõde, that he be byshop of Rome, Third, that he be a prince and lord of certaine franke cities and common welthes. Of these thre we graunte hym but one, that is, to be byshop of Rome: for this is his function, this is his office, & this alone appertained vnto hym as longe as Christis doctryne flourysshed: thother twain he hath & dothe vsurpe arrogantly, moche agaynste the worde of god, and farre contrary to the aunciente custome of the apostels. But where as many thynges oughte to be corrected amonges you in your owne consistorie, of what one I pray you, do you admonysshe the byshoppe of Rome: wherin do you rebuke him: Do you lay any thing to his charge for the treadyng downe of Christis doctrine: Do you wite any thinge of his ambition, any thynge of his

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corrupte and vicyous maners, any thynge of suche shamefull and abhominable crimes, as can not without greatte greefe be named, nor thought vppon without moche offence of chaste myndes: ye speake of priestes garmentes, and of the horedome of Rome, here ye make a great complaynte, here ye be longe and very copious: but of the deprauate vse of the Sacramente, you speake neuer a worde. If ye suffre these abuses in Rome, what shall suche nations doo, as oonely feare your name, and can not here youre voyces, beinge farre from you, nor be taught, your neglygence beinge so greatte as it is? What shall we thinke you wol do in other matters, whan in a thyng most weighty and necessarie ye be soo negligent? For where as that sacrament was insti-

tuted by god, not inuented of men, taken from aboue, not giuen vs for a season, lefte with vs from the begynnynge, halowed, not boughte, sent vs from god, not gotten by fauour of men: a thynge not to be other wise vsed, than it was fyrste ordeyned for, a very gyft, and gyuen to a certayn ende: Do not we worse than yuel, by our craftes to change and conuerte it to disceytefull marchandise, to let no man be parttaker of it, but suche as pay, and such as beleue the spottes of the sowle, be washed away therwith, suche as beleue the greke of conscience is taken awaye by it? It hath chaunced in this thynge, as it lyghtlye dothe in all other, Those that are beste, are sooneste brought out of order. This, bicause it cometh not vnder the eye of man, but is comprehended alone

by

by thought and cogitation, may be lyghtly stayed, stopped, and altered, by false perswasion, whiche the rude multitude, dotynge age, and longe custome, ofte tymes bryng men vnto. If the wyl of god, were as sone perceyued in a mans harte, as the fyze is, whan it is put vnto any part of the body, we myght care the lesse to seke the right knowledge of god. No man crieth, but whan he is petned. But foz as moche as we haue nede of quyckenesse of wytte, industrie, and diligence, we do very yuel to thynke no parte of the bodye of Chziste diseased, where many partes are soze sycke: wozse, to be negligent in redzessynge and curynge of them, where good men haue openid their diseases vnto vs. In your coũsell ye disclose certayn lyttell soozes, but the roote of them, whyche be in

those membres, without the whiche lyfe can not contynue in the bodye, you speake nothynge of, neyther ye do marke, that the very bloudde of the churche and body of Chriſte, is corrupted, the liuer infectid, the hart and the brayne diſeaſed, and the lũges tendynge to putrifaction. For as the body of man can not contynue without bloudde, without the lyuer, without the harte & the lounges: ſo the relygion of Chriſte is by and by loſt, where as true doctrine, good intente, good myniſters, and the right vſe of religion is not. If ye wol reſtore agayne the ryght vſe of ſuche ceremonies, as be not contrary to Chriſtis lawes, yf you woll ſuffre euery man to haue knowlege of the goſpell, yf you woll graunt, that men may be laufully aſſembled togyther: yf you wolle make good

rulers

rulers in the churche: we wol ioyne with you, ye shall fynde nothyng in vs that ought to greue you, we wol forget all olde grudges.

¶ You deeme wrongefully of vs, where you thynke, that we wolde haue all ceremonies taken awaye: For whan we sawe the moste parte of them very naughte, we reteyned styl the necessarie, and threwe away the naughtye: and yet we are in deuysinge, whiche of the reste we may kepe or amende. For this I knowe assuredly, more reuerence is borne among vs to the sacramentis of the Altare and Baptisme, thanne is in those places, where your customes are yet maynteined. Our holy days are so well appoynted, so bestowed in honest vacation, that they maye be more than comparid with yours. And seing that all these thynges be

foule out of order, not only in other places, but also in Rome at the byschops nose, it were your dutie to set them forth to be amended.

But thus farre we haue spoken of the byschop of Rome, why do you speke nothing to proue him a prince as ye call hym: where hath he right to vsurpe states in cõmon welthes: By what rycht hath he Rome, Rauenna, and other cities, by whatte rycht hath he mynished the emperours power: It is a holy poynt to take the charge and rule ouer wydowes, and fatherles chyldren, and to maynteyne their goodes in saftie: and yet the lawe woll not, that men of the clergie meddell with the one or thother, though it be a thyng very necessarie. Nowe if the lawe wol not suffre them, to meddel with the ordering of private mennes

goodes,

goodes, wol you, that he take vpon him, to rule a hole comminalte, whi= che is expzesly fozbidden, as a thing not lauful foz him that rulith ỹ chur che. And though it were not fozbyd by the lawes: yet bycause it is not mete, that one manne shall rule in so many matters, in so many places so farre a sonder, you lyke pzudente men shulde haue counsayled youre byshop, to haue imployed the most parte of his care, in the redzessynge of Chzistis religyon amonges his people. Jt is yet fresche in memozie, what warres, what manslaughter, what ruine hath ensued, sithens bi= shops of Rome haue taken vppon theym, to be kinges and lozdes of states. Jf ye wyll styll maynteyne and kepe his authozitie hoole and sounde, ye muste scrape oute these blottes, by holy gouernyng of god=

dis people, and increasynge of true religion. It is not inoughe for you to haue kinges to fight in your quarel, that you may reigne continually, and reteyne stylle your myghte, strengthe, and power: excepte you fulfylle those thynges, that ye professe, except ye restore agayne Christis religion in those cities, where ye haue caste it out, except your lyfe be suche, as Christe requireth, excepte ye intende nothynge, but that that good menne allowe, excepte you can procure the fauour of god by other meanes than ye haue done hytherto, excepte ye do this, ye shall se shortly, that they, which now mainteyn you, wol endeuour them selues to plucke you downe to your confusyon. Ye can neuer make the name of Luther so hated, but that whan your falshod is knowen, the trouth

woll

woll appere.

¶ Thus haue I brefely shewed, what men that can iudge of religion may allowe, and what they mislyke, in youre dyuysynge together: Now shal I shortly shew you, what men also se lackinge in you, to the gyuinge of good counsayle in thinges amysse. First to make a perfect worke, and to redresse that, that is amisse, the chiefe fundatiō and rote of all muste be, the true knowlege of scripture, of this ye shuld haue spoken and admonysshed the Bysshop of Rome. This knowlege is vtterly depraued and not had. For where so euer be no teachers of the gospel, there mans mynde can not be lyfte vp vnto God, nor haue no perfecte affiance in his promyses. And without this affiance, we haue no hope of saluation. Therfore for as moch

as a-

as amonges you, saincte merites are more estemed, then the voyce of Christ: priestes disceytfull ceremonyes more than true prayer, popes pardons and absolution more than the promyse of god: temporal peyne of the body, more then the amendement of the lyfe: it shal wel appere, that neyther true religion is taught in your churches, neyther stedfaste affiaunce in Christe is, where you teache, neyther knowen, which way helthe of soule maye be goten.

Lernynge entreth into the harte by the eares, and some thynges are taught (as saincte Austen iudgeth) by ceremonies, as well as by wordes. Bothe these are necessarie to be hadde in the churche: but where as your facion of teachyng is naught, and your ceremonies depravate, ye shall neuer builde a stronge edifice

vpon so vuell and weake a fundatti-
on. For though there be some cere-
monies almooste as necessarye as
teachynge, yet if they be not wel v-
sed, they doo moche hurte, and ofte
tymes hynder very moche trewe re-
lygyon.

¶ I see well inoughe, howe harde
it were to make men of your syde to
graunte this to be true, that I say.
For whan the iudgemente is ones
corrupted, & theyr maner of liuinge
contrary to Christis teachyng: it is
not possyble, that goddis doctryne
and good lyuinge shulde be restored
by theym, as longe as they loue to
lyue as they do. They can not be in-
treated to be so moche ageynst them
selfes: and yet seinge Chryste woll
haue it so, force must extort of them,
that they ought frely to graunt vs.
For it can not be denyed (the mooste

parte

part of men perceyue it al redy) that Christe neded not to haue come hyther and dyed for vs, if we myghte or may opteyne heuen by masses, by our good dedes, and other ceremonies. Adimantus, an hethen man, as PLATO recordeth, knewe well inoughe, that nothynge coulde opteyne the fauour of god, but onelye iustice and good lyuynge: and that no man coulde lyue wel, but he that knewe, that god is, and that god careth for vs, and is ryghtefull iudge ouer all our workes, and loketh not for Sacrifice, but for cleannesse of minde. And therfore, he refused and disalowed the opinion of them, that thought a man, whiche hadde done his neyghbour wronge, myghte by sacrifice apeise the wroth of god, no mendes made to the partie that had receyued the wronge.

In

¶In this ye se, that we, hauynge the lawes of god, perceyue scase so moche, as gentils dyd by the lyghte of nature: we scase se, that where as the harte is not truely fyxed in god, there is neither loue, ne reuerēce toward him: But truly where as these two be not, there auailith nother sacrifyce, ne none other ceremonye. Where as the knowledge of god is, there is loue, there god is honored, there the hart desyreth nothing contrarye to goddis wyll, but referreth all his actes and dedes, to his pleasure and commaundemente. For it can not be, that men be voyde of all affections, as the Stoikes mente, it can neuer be, excepte it be in a chrysten man, whose mynde beynge inspyred, and alwayes ruled by god, dothe nothynge, that may shew any affection to be in hym, nothing that

may

maye hurte hym, or anye other his neyghbour. These phylosophers sawe, that a man oughte to mayster all affections: yet they theym selfe coulde neuer atteyne to it. Why? bicause they knewe not god. For seing all thynge is corrupted in vs by nature, we beinge naturally inclyned to all maner of Concuppyscences, if Christe be not shewed and preached vnto vs, by whom we receyue helth from god, all our thoughtes muste nedes be troublesom, daungerous, and naughte, all our endeuour tendeth to our own profyte, and seketh lyttell the knowlege and honour of god. Christ therfore must be taught, which giueth vs quietnesse of hart, and forgyuenesse of synne, whiche alone coud and hath delyuered mankynde frome the peyne dewe for his trespales.

Wherfore

Wherfore firste and formost, the Bysshop of Rome shulde haue bene put in remembraunce herof. Secõdarily, bycause there be fewe, that teache well, they wolde be diligently sought oute, that are able to take the office of a preacher vpon them. But nowe adayes, ye doo not onely not passe of them that preache well, and haue done so, longe sythens, ye do not onely not pulle them to you, but you flee frome them: ye do not onely not ayde theym, but you kepe them in chaynes: ye reteyne theym not in townes, but ye exile and banysshe them: ye delyuer theym not out of danger, but ye most iniustlye and cruelly slee theym. What other thing is taught in our churchis, but that all writinges, all ceremonies, shoulde tende to teache men knowledge, to shewe them, that all mens

nature is corrupted, and that by the deathe of Christe we are delyuered, and by hym haue we opteyned forgyuenes of synne and blysse euerlastynge. It is falsely reported of vs, that we discourage men frome doing good workes, falsely feyned, that we intende to breake all good order and ceremonies. And what a crueltie is this of you, whyle we go aboute to put downe all those thynges, that can not stande with Christis teachynge, whyles we studye to reyse and set vp agayne the true ceremonies, whiles we fetch in agein the true trade and olde fashion of preachynge, what crueltie is it, to offer vs the galowes, burnyng, and suche other moste terrible peynes? Grekes of olde tyme were neuer so cruell (albe it they offered for sacrifice, to their fals goddis, men aliue)

as

as ye be to vs in your punishmētes.

¶ This cruell maner of punyshement causeth vs to thynke, that it is impossible for you to iudge vpright ly of our matters. And all be it that after so many bokes made by vs, ye myghte haue ben well satisfied, instructed, and taughte, what mynde we beare to Chrystis relygion: yet howe yuel so euer you thinke of vs, ye shoulde haue mynded a councill generall, and suche as good meinne myghte haue ben called to, of whose good lyfe and good lernynge, there mtghte appere sufficient testimony. And forasmoch as in a general concill, there ought to be no suspityon, eyther of cruelnes or of forcynge of any man, there wolde haue ben chosen suche a place, where as all men myght haue resorted to gether, and frely haue spoken their mindes, and

also where suche myghte haue bene kepte out, suche I saye, as for theyr naughtye lyfe, and ignorannce of scripture, for theyr symonye and other vices, no lawe woll admytte to meddel with matters of the church. For if they maye not be suffered to speke in matters, that chaunce dayly, moche lesse they ought to be hard in suche a solemne assemble, specially at this tyme, where as al thinges are ruffled in the churche, and very fewe thynges are in good order. Amonge so many bishops as are in Almain, there is not one, that ought to be harde there, if the olde canons myghte be restored to theyr olde vigour & strength. In Fraunce there be but fewe, and yet more than be in Almayne. Of Italy I can saye nothynge. ENGLANDE is aloone pereles, wonderfullye amended:

England

ENGLANDE maye be a mirrour, a guyde, a teacher, an exaumple to all the reſte.

¶ There be manye amonges you, that crie and ſay, that no man ought to haue a voice in the generall coū=cill, but they alone that are of the clergie: and of theſe ye take not the beſte lerned, but woll that greatteſt in dignitie, haue the chiefe ſuffra=gies: whoſe ſayinges if they be al-lowed, yf good lyuynge and good lerning be not regarded, what good can come of councils? Therfore in this poynte ye ſhulde haue moued the byſhop of Rome, to opteyne of kynges, and of all nations, honeſt men, men well lerned, men of holy conuerſation: that general councils therby might recouer agayne their olde auctozitie, in truely defyninge of matters, whiche thinge councils

of late haue loſt with a gret ſhame. And this mooſte ſpecially muſte be foꝛſeene, that theyꝛ iudgemente be not allowed, whiche ſaye, that men of Luthers ſecte oughte therfoꝛe to haue no audience in the councill, bi=cauſe they haue bꝛoken the decrees of councilles: Foꝛ hitherto no man coude pꝛoue that ſayinge true. And I ſay moꝛe, No councilles are of a=ny valure, oꝛ ought to be kepte, but they, wherin nothynge is decreed, contrary to the wꝛytynges of the a=poſtels. Theyꝛ bokes, that you call Lutherans, beare ſufficient recoꝛde, that they haue wꝛitten nothing con=trarye to the honour of Chꝛyſte, noꝛ the mynde of thapoſtels, noꝛ yet a=gainſt auncient councilles: whiche oughte to be as a rule foꝛ vs, theyꝛ after comers. If ye wolle, that the churche flouryſhe, and the flocke of

Chꝛiſt

Chriſte proſpere and encreaſe plentuouſely, Take away all gay, high, and honorable titles, ſet lower yuel gotten honour, let fraudes and gyles haue no place, let good lyuynge be preferred, haue reſpecte to ryght knowlege, put herebnto dilygence, thynges can nat but amende. Noo men may bringe this to paſſe better thā you, none ſhal haue more praiſe of wyſedome, or greatter profytte therof, than ye. You ſhall than be in high reputation, if by your diligence and vertue, the worlde be broughte to lyue well and godlye. What honeſt life can there be, where as religion is diſtroyed, and where good ceremonies ar clean miſvſed? What pleſure, where as is ſo great debate and diſcorde? Here ones agayne Contarene, I beſeche the for thy great lerninge, and ſo do I the

Frederike, byshop of Salerne, for the honour that thou haste had by refulyng to be a cardynal. I beleche and pray the also Sadolete, for the honor that thou hast had by lernung I beleche you all, whiche are deputed to debate these thynges, that through you the olde maner of lernynge may be restored, the olde Canons haue theyr place ageyne, and that the naughty & peruers vse of ceremonies by you may be amended. ¶ You ought in no wyse to let this occasion slyp youre handes, if you be desirous to further Christis religion. For it is nothynge so, as you feare that it is: you thinke it impossible, that we shuld agree with you: you thinke, that no communication betwene you and vs, can bryng vs to an vnitie and concorde: bycause men of a long tyme haue sayd, that

we

we take awaye all ceremonies, and that we woll suffre you to haue nothynge, whiche hath ben instituted syth the apostels tyme. This repoꝛt as touchynge the ceremonies, we say, is a falle lye, and so we pꝛoue it by our dede. Foꝛ where as there be thꝛe soꝛtes of ceremonies: one, whiche is necessarie, we mayntein most ernestly: an other, whiche is contrarie to goddis lawes, we can not abide: as foꝛ the thirde, our mynd is to vse a moderation. Foꝛ if there be any good oꝛder at all, which saynte Paule commaundeth vs to haue, foꝛ the mayntenance and confirmation of that feyth, whiche we ought to yeld to god and Chꝛist, this same must nedes remayne in ceremonies necessarie, and in those that are moderated. Surelye they that wolle maynteyn those ceremonies, that ar

falsely feyned, and contrary to goddis lawe: either they do not vnderstande, what the trouthe requireth, or els for their owne priuate weale, they wolle not suffre a necessarie reformation to be hadde. And for bycause Sadolete, ye do not percepue the difference, that we put herein, ye accuse vs, and beare men in hande, that we wolde haue no man better than other, that we wolde no resorte of people shulde be to churches, no knelynge, no syngynge, no sensyng shuld be in the tẽples, that we wold the vniuersall church were subuerted, so that if your authoritie were ones taken away, we myght do euery thynge at our pleasure without any reproche. We be contente with all ceremonies, that in any wyse be conformable and agreinge to oure religion. Yea this also we permytte,

that

that what soo euer dothe not defyle our religion, shoulde be lefte to the determination of a generall councill: They be noo trifles, that make vs to refuse your authozitie, vsurped power, and naughty censures. Sadolete, I wold haue you shewe, what councils toke vppon theym to talke of this popish and pziestly apparayle, that you wzite of.

¶ Foz holy days Sabbatis a Jew did his part, he caused strife & trouble: and foz the same matter there was variance betwene Policrates and Victoz: But you knowe, that Irineus greatly mysliked their discozde, bycause that diuersitie either in holy dayes oz fastyng days breaketh not the bonde of relygion, ne of Christis feithe. What dothe saynte Augustine in his letters to Januarie? Doth he not euen the same, that

we

we require? He requireth a meane in ceremonies. Doth he not also lament, that the burdeyn of ceremonies be moze heuye vnto vs, than euer were any to the Jewes? What wolde he do nowe, whan all thynge is done foz the seruynge of mennes appetite, foz ambition, and foz desire of lucre?

¶Agaynste suche foolysshe trifles what I pzay you saith Esaias, what Jeremias, what Amos the pzophetes? Esaias fozsawe these ceremonyes, and these yuell customes, he sawe, that vayne vanitie shulde folowe the destruction of the Jewes, whiche he sheweth expzesselye: and yet we make as though we redde of no suche thynge.

¶Herein I se not what you 'canne laye agaynste vs, moze than the authozitie of the canons, & the church, whose

whose auctozitie we wold were safe, and in ful strength. But this muste alwais be one special point in the lawes of the church, that pzestes lyue wel and teache wel, that they be pzesente & abyde vpon theyz benefices, & that all they be deposed, whiche haue goten any thynge in the churche by moneye. Neyther he shoulde haue any benefice with cure, whom the courte carieth from it, oz he that leaueth his flocke, and followeth an hauke, pzickynge to the partrige in stede of pzeachynge to his paryshe. Foz as longe as these thynges are suffered vnpunished, howe is it possible relygion to be kepte, and ceremonies vnabused? Foz let the leste parte be ones mysvsed, and the reste can not long continue safe. But you woll not touche the diseases, that ye were set to seke foze: nother ye woll

suffre

ſuffre the partis ſooze greued, to be healed. Ye eſteme mooze the ſmooke of the ſenſars, bowynges and crouchynges, mooze the apparayll that men go in, than ye do the knowlege of right religion, oz the feare of god, oz his honour: where as in deede, theſe thynges are of neceſſitie, and the other foz the ſoule helth nothing at all. Neuer the leſſe they maye in ſome caſe be ſuffered, and are tollerable: but theſe that I ſhal now reherſe, can nother be wynked at, nother defended, as not to aknowlege the abuſe of the ſacrament of the altare: and the abuſe of ceremonyes, as that monkes and pziſtes haue libertye to lyue vnchaſte and vnclenly: and thoſe that endeuour theym ſelfes to amende it, to be troubled, ye and iuged of you vnwozthy to be in the company of good menne. We

are

ar careful and sory for this peruerse iugement: we go not about to breke the ceremonies, specially those, that may stande with Christis relygion, we promyse you to kepe them styll: onely do you this for your parte, see that those thinges be restored, without the whiche, neyther the dignitie of the churche, nother the auctoritie of Christis name can continue.

Nowe here I wol come vnto an other poynte, that moche letteth our agrement. Ye complayne greately, that we be ouer stubborne and rude, and that we intende to destroy al iurisdiction, and to take awaye all riches frome the churche. This you say, may not be suffred. For it is an aunciente custome, that noble men, that come of great stockes, be honorably promoted: from whom so gret cõmodities can not be taken away,

without

without high displesure, and great daunger. If this be the worste, we shall lyghtly be deliuered from gret greefe and trouble, & shortely be ioyned with you. For seynge there be three sortis of men in the church, that rule: one of them mete to teache: another, mete to maintayne the power and ryches of the churche: the third, whiche sometymes hathe bothe the thynges aforesayde, and yet is mete for neither nother. If you wyl be content to reiecte the laste sorte, and suffer the other two to be seuered and diuided distinctly the one frome the other, I trust all stryfe and grudge betwene vs, shalbe by those meanes quite abolysshed, and cleane forgotten. For you requyre in the mynysters of the churche good lyfe and lernynge. Let vs haue suche as be able bothe for theyr lernynge, and

for

for their liuing, to gouerne the people, put a difference betwene them, and the other that haue in their gouernance the goodes of the worlde, and of the cõmon weale: do this, & we truste sone to haue an ende of all matters, that we can nat now agree vpon, or at the leaste wise a greatter moderation of our grudges & stryfes. There be som mẽ of gret blode, whiche woll be ashamed of the gospel: and there be some, that faithfully woll kepe the goodes of the churche. No man cãn make tyrantes beleue, that it is more honour, to be loued and honored of theyr subiectes, than to be feared of theym. But it were a shame for any christen mã to think, that it were a higher dignite, to haue great power and might, thã to professe the gospell, in suche wise as may stãd best with godly liuing.

We ar moued by authozite of many great wise men, to sette an ozder betwene these two soztes. To let passe saint Augustin, saint Ambzose, and other perfect bishops, did not Chzisostom, befoze a multitude of an hũdzed. M. mẽ, in a sermon, greuously lament, that bishops were taken frõ the cure of theiz church, and ocupied in money matters: Thapostels also put a difference betwene the office of bishops and decons. These two soztes had neuer bẽ sondzed, but ẏ they inspired by god, did se befoze, that at one time oz other, some wolde refuse to kepe these ozders, taken by them.

lomil. 98 n Matt.

¶ But peraduenture some mẽ wol say, noble mẽ haue giuẽ gret riches to the church, it is conueniẽt, ẏ theyz posteritie be soneste pferred vnto the same. First noble men ar not fozbid, neither to pzofesse the gospel, nother

to

to haue the gouernance of money & rites. If there be of them, that be vn mete to haue ỹ one or the other, there be laws, that wol such to be regarded, as come of those auncestours, that fyrst enriched this or that churche. Fynally al riches wold be so disposed, that none lack, and an order taken after euery persons degree & sorte, whiche order must so longe be kept, as religion take no hurt by it: an equal and a conuenient distribution shulde be made to men of euery degre. We may lacke riches in Christis churche, but if we be spoyled of true doctryne, than of necessytie we are destitute of all relygyon. Therfore we woll not stryue with you for riches: we require to haue Chrystis doctrine, we desyre to haue true ministers, we wyshe ernestly to haue a free councille in a safe place, where

mē may ſpeke boldly, whither good men and wel lerned maye be called, where the naughty & ignorant perſons ſhal not be admytted as iuges and thiefe doers. If you graunt vs theſe thinges, and wol alſo helpe vs in them, we woll not meddell with great men. And yet as we woll not willingely gyue them the ryches of the churche, that be of great power: ſo if they woll nedes haue them, we wol not gretly ſticke therin. If they deſyre to haue golde and riches, and the gouernance of common weales, we wol not ſtryue with them: for we ſeke not for ſuche thynges, noo no, whan al this that ye ſeke is taken away, the churche remaineth ſtyl: ſo that Chriſtis lernynge do remayne and the goſpell florifhe. Sacrilege is a ſhameful dede, and worthy gret puniſhement: and agaynſt this ma-

ny lawes be made: certainely it is a kynde of Sacrilege, not to dispense the goodes of the church to the that be nedy. And they that do not distribute them in this wyse, doo verye naughtily. Trewe it is, that at this houre the goodes of the churche be meruaylous great and aboundant, we wolde haue them well dyspoſed, but we wold in especial haue the disposition & distribution of them committed to the preachers of the gospel, & ministers of the churche. If they that be rulers, rule the churche well, we ought to reioice at the cõmon profite of christen men: but if they rule not wel, and can not be amended by power, we ought to be sorie. Neuer the lesse, we may not take the matter so greuously, that men think, we wold rather haue our part of the riches, than se the gospel go forward.

Therfore let vs be at a point for the teaching of the gospel, for the sacramentes, and for the ceremonies: and we wol neuer striue with you for the riches, which we were better to lack than that for theym Christis glorie shuld be hindred. If se, there lacketh nothynge, to bringe vs to a perfect peace, if ye wol put a part al displesure and hatred. Ye, not redyng our bokes, haue withdrawen your hartes from vs, ruled by the reporte of them, that loue vs not. And so you beleue, that we intende to distroy al good ordinances. And on the other syde, bicause we are put in feare by many examples, we can not yet, but suspect and thinke, that you intende not a true and an ernest reformatiō of the church. If that, that we mean and go about could synke into your heedes, if we had some certayn assu-

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tance, & good token of your diligẽce & vnfeined faith, we shuld be, bothe out of moche trouble, and with one mynde we with you, wold endeuour our selues to do those thinges, that were best for the common welthe of Christendome.

¶ I suppose ye be none of them, ỹ trust, by force of armes, to maintein your power, and by violence to kepe vnder your aduersaries. I remembre, whan poore Luther was alone, and at warre with all the worlde, no man being more hatid than he was: all his enemies coulde not take his life from him. These studies ar now so encreased within fewe yeres, soo many folowing him, that now they feare lytle your thretnynges. They haue many and great tokens, that god fauorith them: so that if you intende any thing against them, they

ſurely truſte, that no battayle ſhall
pꝛeuaylle, noꝛ haue any ſucceſſe a-
geinſt them, beinge in daunger on-
ly foꝛ the loue they beare to Chꝛiſtis
religion. ẅherfoꝛe while you haue
tyme, thynke vppon this mattier,
loke well about you. If you wolle
be ruled by reaſon, we ſhall eaſilye
defende our parte, ſo that our iuges
be indifferent and iuſte. If the mat-
ter muſte be tried by foꝛce of armes,
Fyꝛſte this were a cruel waye, to put
ſo many common weales of Cꝛiſten
dome in haſarde: Secondarylye,
There is gret danger in this thing,
by reſon your aduerſaries ſtrength
is waxen puiſſant and mighty: And
it maye chaunce, that when menne
ſhall ſe, that ye intende to vſe cruel-
tye, many moo woll take our parte,
thanne yet are knowen to be of our
ſyde. Fynally, admyt that ye might

haue

haue the vpper hande, and opteyne your pourpose, eyther by vntuste iudgemente, or elles by force and vyolence: yet where crueltye, vnrightous dealynge, and grudge of conscience is, there can ye not leade your lyfe in honour, moche lesse in pleasure. Ye can neuer soo destroye vs, but the fundations and rootes woll remayne, wherof alwaye some shall sprynge, that woll be able to iuge truely of our matters. Againe, althoughe you shulde destroy vs all to gether: yet there is a GOD, that seeth all thynges, and is hable to reuenge oure quarell: there is a CHRISTE, in whose tuition and defence we are all, whyche as he was cause of helthe in the worlde, soo is he able, to restore agayne his religion, thoughe it were vtterlye distroyed.

I speake not this Contarene, by cause I iudge you by these your deuises, to intende myschiefe, but bycause there be many amonges you, which if they might haue their mindes, wold cause more mischiefes in Christis churche, than euer we sawe hitherto. But I iudge this of you, that god maye rule your hartes, I knowe that ye lacke neither lerning nor wysedom, it may be that ye wol loue his honour, and beare a zele to his trouthe, ye may forsee that, whiche shall bothe please god, and be moche to your honour. You amonges all men ar chosen for great causes, your honour is to restore Christis doctrine, and to appoynt suche as woll and shall be able to teache the gospelle, to amende the ceremonies, and to put a differēce betwene the mynysters of the churche. By

these

these meanes you may bring in ble ageyne the olde maner of lerninge, the olde discipline of the churche: without the which neyther your dignitie can be cõmendable, nor your authoritie continue any longer, nor religion flourishe at any time. For there is no honour, where as is noo good gouernãce: where gouernors liue not wel, they can haue but smal commendation. Men can neither be obedient, nother loue you that do not your dutie. men wold be taught & holpen out of ignorance, for many mens hartis be wonne this way, and authoritie lyghtly opteyned. But when subiectes be not set by, & officers doo not their duetyes, then authoritie wasteth a pase, noo man obeyeth them, but either for feare or flaterie. Whereby it followeth, that with authoritie, honour decreaseth:

and so religion is moche hyndered. Wherfore I praye you, put your helpynge hande to the relygyon of Christe, nowe beinge in decaye and redye to falle: heale you those olde greate and almoste desperate diseases, with whiche the churche is sore vexed, and pyneth dayelye awaye. And for as moche as you your selfe acknowledge manye and greuous fautes to be in the churche, besydes many mo, that you speke nothynge of: be you content, that our men restore the foundation and grounde of relygyon amonges them selfes, hyndre them not, suffre them to accomplysshe the worke, whiche they fortunately haue begunne. If there be any thynge, as ye saye there is, that is not to be allowed amonge vs, let there be appoynted a councille, where frely, and without feare

of punyshemente, men maye saye theyr myndes, in all mattiers. Let all affections be layde aparte, which maye hyndre the trouthe: and vse suche as shall hurte no manne, as shall breake noo lawes, but rather reteyne equitie. For who canne approue, excuse, or allowe any council, wherin mennes priuate commodytyes are onelye regarded, wherein occasyons are soughte, for to put men to deathe, wherin corners are serched, to couer and hyde byce? All maner of generall Councilles oughte alonelye to be kepte, to the furtheraunce of common weales, and in them oughte to be vsed no crueltie. In them must reigne feith and dylygence, to cure all dyseases. Wherfore lette there be noo encrochynge couetousnes in you,

put

put away al crueltie: let none come there, that fauour vice, or at the leſt let them be no iuges there. Let them be ſought out, which rather ſeke the welthe of the hole, than of a fewe, which are glad of iuſtice and equitie. If euer there were or can be any tyme, wherin it was, or can be nedefull to ſeke ſuch remedies, to vſe ſuche induſtrie and dilygence, as we requyre in you, truly it is euen now in our tyme, wher in dede no medicine canne be miniſtred, to diſeaſes, that haue of a longe ſeaſon bene roted in the churche without great perill and danger. For where as vices haue their defenſe of longe cuſtome, a cloker of errour and naughtyneſs, ayded by barbarous ignorãce, that hath ruled religion, and all other thinges, theſe many yeres, where as councils haue ben callyd, not for reformа-

formation of thinges out of order, but rather to mayntayne ambityon and pryde, where as there hath bene no man that wolde or coulde without perill open the diseases, & shew remedies for the same, thinke that it is nowe your parte, in this lyght of trouthe, you hauynge also power nowe in your handes, by the cõsent of your byshoppe, to swage and appease all oure troubles, to make a peace and concorde betwene vs, to delyuer the worlde frome miserye, whiche dayly encreaseth, to plante and set forthe newe rotes of trewe religion, fansies remoued, and olde doctrine established agayn. Thinke that he is aboue you, that made this worlde and ruleth it. Remembre he seeth, and is iudge of al that you go aboute, and that you can not swage his ire, moche lesse haue his fauour,

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excepte ye do wel and meane truely. ¶ Consider, that there haue benne and euer shal be men in this worlde, whiche can truely iuge of your lyfe and maners. If they disalowe your actes and deedes, they woll here after grudge to gyue you that auctoritie, whiche were necessarye for you to haue. Thus fare you wel. At Argent.

The. 29. of Marche. Anno domini. 1538.

LONDINI IN AEDIBVS
THOMAE BERTHE-
LETI REGII IM-
PRES-
SORIS. EXCVS.

ANNO. M. D. XXXVIII.

CVM PRIVILEGIO.

A Way-
ing and conside-
ring of the
INTERIM by the honourworthy and highly learned PHILLIP MELANCTHON.

Translated into Englyshe by John Rogers.

1548.

EVR